

APPOINTMENT OF PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES TO THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

GUIDANCE NOTES

1. Background

1.1 Huntingdonshire District Council is seeking to recruit two Parish Council representatives to serve on its Standards Committee.

1.2 Despite changes to 'standards' arrangements under the Localism Act 2011, the Council is still required to -

- ◆ promote and maintain high standards of conduct by elected and co-opted Members;
- ◆ adopt a Code of Conduct and establish and maintain a new Register of Members' Interests for both District and Parish Councillors;
- ◆ have in place arrangements under which complaints can be investigated and allegations of misconduct can be made against District and Parish Councillors.

2. Retention of the Standards Committee

2.1 Whilst it is no longer a duty under law to establish a Standards Committee, the District Council has decided to retain a committee for this purpose on the basis that there still was a need to respond to standards issues and consider how to deal with complaints and investigations.

2.2 The new committee comprises seven elected Members of the District Council. An Independent Person, appointed recently, may also attend meetings, but in a non-voting capacity.

3. Why do we need Parish Council Representatives?

3.1 The District Council still has responsibility for dealing with complaints against Town and Parish Councillors. The Standards Committee will also continue to train Parish Councils on the Code of Conduct and offer advice when requested. Having Parish Council representatives as Members of the Committee (or as part of case hearings) will ensure that the Committee retains an insight into the work and practices of local councils and such representatives also will continue to bring knowledge to the meetings on local issues which has been valuable in the past when assessing parish cases.

4. What is expected of a Parish Council Representative?

4.1 Parish Council representatives will be invited to attend quarterly meetings. Currently these are usually held on weekdays in the late afternoon at Pathfinder House, Huntingdon. Additional meetings may be convened as necessary according to the scheduling of urgent business which may need to be transacted at short (but rarely less than a week's) notice. There may also be case hearings held to determine whether a Councillor has breached the Code of Conduct but again these should be infrequent.

4.2 In return the District Council will -

- ◆ provide you with advice and support;
- ◆ pay for you to attend approved training courses; and
- ◆ reimburse your reasonable travelling and subsistence costs in attending meetings and training events. An allowance of £231 per annum also would be payable and it would be the expectation that those appointed would serve for a three year term.

5. Still Interested?

5.1 If you wish to express an interest in the positions, please do so in writing to the Monitoring Officer in no more than 250 words by **2nd November 2012** and return it to -

Colin Meadowcroft
Head of Legal and Democratic Services
Huntingdonshire District Council
Pathfinder House
St Mary's Street
Huntingdon PE29 3TN

5.2 However, should you wish to discuss this opportunity informally before composing your statement please contact Christine Deller ☎ 01480 388007.

5.3 Out of courtesy you might wish to seek the support of the Chairman of your Town or Parish Council before submitting your statement.

5.4 Your interest will be considered by the Chairman of the Standards Committee and the Monitoring Officer.

5.5 Thank you for your interest.